

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJ: REACTIONS TO NOVEMBER 16-17 LOCAL ELECTIONS

REF: ROME 16847

1. PARTY AND EDITORIAL REACTIONS TO RESULTS OF SCATTERED LOCAL ELECTIONS HELD NOVEMBER 16-17 FOLLOW PREDICTABLE POLITICAL LINES. COMMUNISTS FOCUS ON MAJOR GAINS SINCE 1970 LOCAL ELECTIONS AND PLAY DOWN THEIR 4.1 PERCENT LOSS COMPARED WITH JUNE 15 RESULTS. COMMENTS BY PCI LEADERS POINT WITH PRIDE TO CONTINUED GAINS OF "LEFT" AS A WHOLE AND WELCOME WITH "SATISFACTION" STRONG SOCIALIST SHOWING.

2. SOCIALIST SPOKESMEN EXPRESS GREAT SATISFACTION WITH ELECTION RESULTS. PSI DIRECTORATE MEMBER VITTORELLI DECLARED THAT PSI MUST SEEK TO BECOME THE THIRD "LARGE" PARTY IN ITALY AND THAT TARGET FIGURE FOR PSI SHOULD BE 20 PERCENT OF ELECTORATE. VITTORELLI WELCOMED 3.6 PERCENT PSI GAIN OVER JUNE 15 RESULTS AS INDICATION THAT PARTY ALREADY MAKING GOOD PROGRESS TOWARD THIS GOAL. BY ADDING THIS FIGURE (BASED ON SCATTERED LOCAL ELECTIONS) TO PSI NATIONAL TOTAL OF 12 PERCENT REACHED IN JUNE 15 VOTE, VITTORELLI

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RATHER OPTIMISTICALLY ARRIVED AT PSI POTENTIAL VOTE

TOTAL OF 16 PERCENT.

3. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY SPOKESMEN EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF PCI DROP BELOW JUNE 15 ELECTORAL PEAK. DC SENATE GROUP LEADER BARTOLOMEI COUPLED PCI RELATIVE DECLINE WITH MODERATE LOSSES OF NEO-FASCIST MSI TO CONCLUDE THAT ELECTORATE TENDING TO REDUCE ITS SUPPORT FOR THE POLITICAL EXTREMES. DC PLAYED DOWN ITS OWN LOSSES BY EMPHASIZING THAT MANY VOTES GOING TO DISSIDENT DC AND MIXED ELECTORAL LISTS ARE CLOSER TO DC THAN ANY OTHER PARTY AND, WHEN ADDED TO DC TOTALS, SHOW THAT PARTY HELD RATHER WELL IN RECENT VOTE.

4. SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, WHO GAINED SLIGHTLY (0.7 PERCENT) OVER JUNE 15 TOTALS, APPEAR ALMOST AS HAPPY AS PSI LEADERS. PSDI SECRETARY TANASSI DECLARED THAT VOTE RESULT GAVE THE LIE TO "SHAMEFUL CAMPAIGN" IN LEFTIST PRESS ASSERTING THAT PSDI IN ADVANCED STATE OF DECOMPOSITION AFTER JUNE 15 ELECTION. TANASSI REFERRED WITH APPARENT SATISFACTION TO FACT THAT AMONG "INTERMEDIATE" PARTIES, LIBERALS AND REPUBLICANS LOST WHILE ONLY PARTIES OF "SOCIALIST AREA" DID WELL.

5. DESPITE INTERESTED PARTY NATURE OF EVALUATIONS GIVEN TO WEEKEND LOCAL ELECTIONS, VIRTUALLY ALL COMMENTATORS HAD GOOD GRACE TO ADMIT MINISCULE SIZE OF ELECTORATE INVOLVED AND LIMITED SIGNIFICANCE OF VOTE.BEAUDRY

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